(a) the details of areas identified by his Ministry for promotion of trade and commerce with South East Asian Countries through North Eastern Region in terms of Prime Minister package announced in October, 1996;

(b) the proposd area of N.E.R. wihich will be connected through Trans Asia Railway network; and

(c) the other infrastructural facilities proposed to be created during the Ninth Plan Period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Ministry of Commerce has identified agro products including spices, horticultural and floricultural produce as the thrust commodities for promotion of trade and commerce with South East Asian Countries through North-Eastern region. In this regard, detailed studies have also been commissioned through concerned trade promotion organisations including Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, etc. In order to boost border trade from North-Eastern States, traditional trade routes with Myanmar have been activated.

(b) India has urged ESCAP to connect North-Eastern Region under the proposed Trans Asia Railway link between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

(c) Ministry of Commerce provides assistance, under its Critical Infrastructure Balance Scheme, to the State Governments for strategic debottlenecking and creation of export related infrastructure on receipt of specific proposals from the State Governments. Export Promotion Industrial Parks have also been sanctioned in two States. It is also proposed to create shortly cold storage facility in Guwahati airport.

[Translation]

Lok Adalats

5502. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Lok Adalats organised in Uttar Pradesh during each of the last three years till date;

(b) the number of cases disposed of therein;

(c) whether the Government propose to organise some more Lok Adalats in Uttar Pradesh;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House when received from the Uttar Pradesh Legal Aid & Advice Board, Lucknow.

(c) to (e) Lok Adalats which were heretofore voluntary afforts for resolution of disputes through persuasive and conciliatory methods have been accorded statutory base with the enforcement of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 with effect from 9th Novermber, 1995. The District Legal Services Authorities and Taluk Legal Services Committees etc. as envisaged under the Act are yet to be constituted though the provisions of Chapter III of the said Act have been extended to the State of Uttar Pradesh w.e.f. 5.7.1996. Pending constitution of the Authorities etc. as envisaged under the said Act, Lok Adalats in the State of Uttar Pradesh are being organised on the pattern as was in vogue prior to the enforcement of the Legal Services Authorities Act.

[English]

Joint Venture of Ford Motor Company

5503. SHRI UTTAM SINGH PAWAR: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ford Motor Company has submitted a proposal to the Government for the setting up of a new joint ventures company to be called Automotive Components India (P) Ltd.;

(b) if so, the details thereof including equity participation of the ventrue; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. M/s. Ford Motor Company, USA submitted a proposal for setting up a joint venture company to be called Automotive Components India Pvt. Ltd. for manufacture of auto components in Tamil Nadu with a paid up capital of Rs. 16200 lakhs. M/s. Ford Motor Company of UsA would have an equity participation of 80% in the Joint Venture. The proposal has since been approved.

Handloom Industries

5504. SHRI T. GOVINDAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken any remedial measures to protect the handloom industry in view of the increase in freight charges announced recently as the industry is already facing financial constraints due to decline in export;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (c) With a view to protect the handloom industry from the impact of freight charges, the Government has been implementing Mill Gate Price Scheme. Under the Scheme, State Handloom Development Corporations, State Apex/Regional Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Societies, Handloom Development Centres, Primary Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Societies, Registered Societies (NGOs),

and any other Organisation recommended by the State Government are eligible for reimbursement of freight charges on procurement of yarn through National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd.

The exports of Handloom Fabrics and made-ups has registered an increase from Rs. 1491.32 crores in 1995-96 to Rs. 1758.89 crores in 1996-97.

[Translation]

Decline in Export

5505. SHRI L. RAMANA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the value and details of the export and import undertaken during 1996-97;

(b) the extent of increase or decline registered in export and import in comparison to the previous year;

(c) the reaction of the Government in regard to the lowest rate of increase in export; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to achieve the export target?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE(SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) As per the latest information available from DGCI&S, for the year 1996-97 (Provisional), export are valued at US $ 33105.72 million and imports at US $ 38547.81 million. These represent an increase of around 4% and 6% respectively over the corresponding levels in the previous year.

The details of exports and imports by principal commodities & Countries are voluminous and are contained in the monthly publication "Foreign Trade Statistics of India' (Principal Commodities and Countries)" Publihed by DGCI & S, Calcutta and which are also placed in the Parliament Library.

(c) Though exports have not declined, the rate of growth of exports during 1996-97 has been relatively lower. This could be attributed to inter alia international market conditions, tariff and non-tariff barriers, infrastructural bottlenecks, cost of export credit etc.

(d) Export promotion is a continuous exercise.This includes simplification of policy and procedures for provoding export friendly environment, involvement of States in export promotion, consultation with export organisation, trade and industry to tackle general as well as sector specific problems for initiation of appropriate remedial measures from time to time.

[English]

Assistance to Coir Industry

5506. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Government have received any proposal from Government of Uttar Pradesh for getting assistance for the Coir Industry in Uttar Pradesh; and

(b) If so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Inclusion of computer floppy under OGL

5507. DR. M.P. JAISWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have announced some computer hardware and software items under O.G.L.;

(b) If so, the details of such items;

(c) whether the computer floppy is still under restricted list; and

(d) If so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) No, Sir. Policy for hardware and Software item is same as in the previous year and there is no change.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There are no restrictions on the import of floppy disc drive etc., for computers.

(d) Does niot arise.

[Translation]

P.M.R.Y.

5508. SHRI N.J. RATHWA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that the funds allocated for Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana is being diverted to other purposes in the country;

(b) If so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the steps being taken or propose to be taken by the Govenrnment to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

[English]

Defaulters in Export Obligation

5509. SHRI RAJABHAU THAKRE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item appeared in the Pioneer dated April 10,1997 under captioned "Export obligation defaulters to be penalised";